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CZECHOSLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, established by a law unanimously adopted by the national assembly, was inaugurated 17-18 November 1952.

Several advanced scientific organizations preceded the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The most important of these was the Royal Czech Society, founded in 1784. Later, the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts was organized. These institutions were purely ostentatious, since they had no laboratories for the natural sciences. Their activities were mainly limited to discussions of the works of instructors at high scientific institutions. The organizations and functions of the society and the academy were in complete accord with the old social structure. Under such conditions, the new Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences could not be created merely by the mechanical unification of the old scientific organizations. It was necessary, therefore, to create a completely new kind of academy, which could take an active part in the economic and cultural development of the democratic state.

Until 1945, scientific work in Czechoslovakia was conducted only in higher scientific institutions, and these were completely closed during the fascist occupation. Therefore, before the new academy could begin, scientific cadres had to be educated and scientific centers had to be established. As early as 1949, postgraduate aspirantships were organized on the Soviet model, and from year to year the rate of graduate activity has increased. At about the same time, scientific research institutions were set up, with the task of developing the principal branches of science, particularly mathematics, physics, astronomy, chemistry, geology and biology. In time, these institutions were strengthened, supplemented with more highly qualified scientific cadres, and supplied with scientific equipment.

The task of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences is to develop research activities in theoretical and applied sciences, and to be responsible for the training of scientific cadres and for the popularization of science. The academy has the right to confer the highest academic degrees.

The academy is divided into eight sections: physics and mathematics, geology and geography, chemistry, biology, technology, history and philosophy, law and economics, and languages.

The academy includes seven natural-science institutes and several scientific centers in the field of social sciences, previously belonging to the Ministry of Schools, Sciences, and Arts. Also created were several completely new scientific institutions, laboratories, and study rooms and a number of commissions for individual branches of science which at present have no scientific center.

The Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute, founded in 1950 by Academician Zdenek Nejedly, who is its president, was also admitted into the academy. The chief task of this institute is to implant the achievements, and experience of Soviet science into Czechoslovak scientific, cultural, and economic life.

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Among the larger scientific organizations within the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences are the Mathematics Institute, directed by Academician Eduard Czech; the Institute of Technical Physics; the Astrophysical Laboratory and Geophysics Institute; the Institute of Geology; the Institute of Organic Chemistry; and the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Mechanics. The Polarographic Institute is directed by J. Heyrovskiy, and the Laboratory of Physical Chemistry by R. Brdicka. The head of the Institute of Biology is Academician I. Malek.

The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences now has 50 Academicians. This highest scientific rank was conferred on them by the president of the republic, who has also established the first presidium of the academy. Academician Zdenek Nejedly, became the first president of the academy. Forty-two Corresponding Members were elected at the First General Meeting. This number will be increased in later elections. More than 2,000 associates work in the institutes and laboratories of the academy.

The creation of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences is an historical event in the development of the sciences in Czechoslovakia.

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